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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4100  
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
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RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 6146  
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 0007  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 4388  
RHMCSUU/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
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SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: CSI COMES TO ASHGABAT

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11. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

12. (SBU) SUMMARY: Turkmen forensic specialists and police detectives participated in a basic Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) training course in Ashgabat last week. During the training, participants learned everything from how to lift fingerprints and shoeprints to enhancing the use of digital photographs of crime scenes. In a departure from the often reticent behavior of Turkmen officials in international trainings or conferences, the mood of the course was lively, with unprecented participation. Feedback from the participants, particularly the General Prosecutor's Office, was positive. END SUMMARY.

13. (U) Three U.S. forensic experts put on a five-day training course on crime scene investigation in Ashgabat the week of January 11. The training, funded by INL, was part of DOJ/ICITAP's (International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program) ongoing forensic assistance program with the Turkmen government. The goal of the course was to improve the quality of physical evidence introduced in Turkmen criminal prosecutions. The collection of higher quality physical evidence reduces the need to rely on testimonial evidence at trial. The course focused on fingerprints, shoeprints, the use of sketches, digital photography, the chain of custody of physical evidence and case studies.

14. (U) The 25 course participants came from the General Prosecutor's Office (13), the Interior Ministry (7), and the State Counternarcotics Service (5), and represented all five provinces in Turkmenistan. Most of the participants were forensic experts, and the rest detectives.

PAINTING WITH LIGHT

15. (U) Many of the participants were amazed to learn that even dark crime scene photos can be made bright, and objects visible, through the injection of light on the image. Most expressed a particular interest in the use of digital photography, and the student who was selected at the end as the best course participant, prosecutor Murad Annamuradov, received an infrared digital camera as a gift from the

instructors.

#### CASE STUDIES

¶6. (U) The trainers divided the participants into four groups, each of which presented an actual case study encountered in their work. One case presented by a team of prosecutors involved a difficult murder/suicide case in Ashgabat, and how physical evidence was used to solve it. Another told of the case he investigated in 1999 of the murder of an Amcit employee of the Halliburton company in Balkanabat. He noted that the autopsy findings were surprisingly fast and accurate regarding the cause and time of death. In their own presentations, the trainers also gave details of difficult cases they had solved in their own work, and the role of forensics.

#### UNPRECEDENTED PARTICIPATION

¶7. (SBU) In general, Turkmen prosecutors are more educated than other government officials and do not report to the Ministry of National Security. They therefore tend to be more open and engaged during international conferences and training sessions. Most officials, however, tend not to talk or ask questions in such gatherings, often skip classes or otherwise fail to participate. The CSI students, in contrast, were extremely active and engaged. We attribute the difference in this case to a number of factors, including the experience level of the trainers, and particularly the warmth they conveyed, which put the class at ease. This created an environment that motivated the students to participate in discussions. Two of the trainers had been to Turkmenistan previously and were familiar with local conditions. The students were also fascinated with the

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background of the third trainer, a coroner, and the fact that he works in Las Vegas, a place of allure for many Turkmen and a frequent destination for first-time travelers to the U.S. (At the graduation ceremony, many referred to him as "Mr. Las Vegas" and clamored to have photos taken with him).

¶8. (U) It was also helpful that at the end of each training day, several participants deemed the most active for that session were rewarded with a "Leatherman" multitool, an object of great interest to the mostly-male group of participants (there were also two female students, who appeared less interested in winning a multitool).

¶9. (SBU) COMMENT: The CSI training was a success on all levels, both in substance and, even more importantly, in the opportunities it gave to build rapport with our Turkmen law enforcement colleagues. One participant, senior prosecutor Batyr Kulhanov of the General Prosecutor's Office, commented that the seminar was well organized and that the subjects were taught "at the highest level." We also learned this week that General Prosecutor Hojamyradov had called a meeting with participants who attended from his office, noting to the group, "There is a lot for us to learn from Americans. They are real professionals in what they do." END COMMENT.

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